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## THE DANUBE-TISA-DANUBE CANAL SYSTEM

D. Ristic

When the early spring rains start and the snow thaws, a great part of the Penat is under water. Extensive areas sown with winter wheat turn into a watery waste. In summer, the heat dries up all the moisture and the vegetation is in danger again. The seeds which have survived the spring floods now have to resist the hot sun. The Danube and Tisa rivers are too weak to water the huge Pannovian Plain. Consequently, the most fertile grain area in Yugoslavia cannot produce as it should because it is exposed to great climatic changes. In drought years, the yield is so small that it is hardly sufficient to feed the population. Floods of average size have done an annual damage of 500 million dinars.

Although the people themselves have attempted to remedy this situation, the prewar government did not support their efforts sufficiently. Only a few tens of kilometers were excavated for a canal system. A few protective levees and about 100 drainage systems were built, mostly in the Banat. Nothing was done for irrigation. Therefore, farmers concentrated on growing crops, mostly corn and wheat, which were not sensitive to great variations in moisture.

The climatic conditions have also affected the structure of the soil. In the Banat and Backa, there are about 150,000 hectares of marshes which are poor or completely unproductive areas, serving only as pastures at present.

In less than a year, 40 experts and their auxiliary personnel have worked out plans on how the Banat and Backa are to be canalized. The master plan, already drawn up, calls for the building of a 10,000-kilometer-long Danube-Tisa-Danube canal system. Seven hundred kilometers of the system will be a series of large canals for barge traffic and boats of up to 1,000 tons; the other canals will serve mostly for irrigation and drainage.

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Work on the canal system was started last spring. A great part of the work is still experimental, because it is necessary to determine the density of the soil and its resistance to water, at what angle the banks will be excavated, and whether they should be reinforced with stone.

The main part of the canal system will start and end on the Danube. It will start in Bezdan, cut across the northern part of Backa to join the Tisa, and go across the Banat, where it sill again connect the Tisa and the Danube.

The Danube-Tisa-Danube canal system will guarantee the irrigation of 500,000 hectares. The annual increase in the value of the crop ydeld in this area is estimated at more than 5 million dinars. Although part of the land. will be used for new crops, the increase in white grains will be 11,250 carboads; corn, 37,500; hemp, 5,000; hay, 85,000; and vegetables, approximately 20,000 carboads.

The small rice fields in the Banat and Backa will be enlarged to 10,000 hectares. The entire annual rice crop will be 2,000 carloads. The plan calls for former marshes to be made into rice fields. Experiments have shown that "desetka" and "meles-sarena" rice grow especially well in this area, as these varieties develop in 100 days and are particularly suited to the climate here. First-class seed is to be produced here in 1951.

The great increase in hay and feed will affect the development of animal husbandry in this area, where to date it has not been developed sufficiently. The expected increase in livestock is estimated at approximately 240,000 head.

The Danube-Tisa-Danube canal system will also become a transportation network. It will connect a great number of industrial centers, towns, and villages. The system will be linked later with canals in other republics, for instance in Croatia, where another canal system is planned.

The system will also connect industrial enterprises; thus raw material will be transported to the enterprises and waste will be carried away from the enterprises to the fields, where it will serve as fertilizer.

Large artificial fishponds, producing more than 600 carloads of choice fish annually, will be developed. The falls and junctions between the canals will be utilized for hydroelectric power.

At some points excavation has started on the canal, but not on a large scale. The excavation is still of a local and experimental nature, and connected with agricultural research. The canal administration has organized experimental fields where irrigation is being tried. The fields are under the management of the Yugoslav Bureau of Agricultural Research. One year's work has produced very good results. This year, research will be done on the possibility of growing cotton in the Vojvodina.

The main task of the administration and the bureau is to find terrain where it is possible to concentrate plants to be cultivated by irrigation. This is necessary because it is impossible to water small sections artificially. The development of cooperatives in the Banat and Backa offers extensive opportunities for realizing this plan. By growing plants on large areas, the fields of some cooperatives will be changed over to rice cultivation; members will thus concentrate on growing a single crop.

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The planned project requires automatic drainage through gravitation. All irrigation is to emanate from a single system. About 5,000 tractors, 6,000 cultivators, a great number of machines, some thousands of new buildings and storehouses, equipment to regulate the water in the canals, and 4,500 generator units are to be prepared. Much electric power will be needed; this is not available in sufficient quantities in the Vojvodina, and will have to be obtained from other sections. A telephone network, 700 kilometers long, is to be installed. More than 200 new bridges and about 110 kilometers of new roads are to be built.

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